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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1054th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 5 April 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. POCAR

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 40 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Second periodic report of Panama (continued) (CCPR/C/42/Add.7 and Add.11)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Cruz, Ms. de León, Ms. Pardo and Mr. Pereira (Panama) took places at the Committee table.

Freedom of movement and expulsion of aliens (articles 12 and 13 of the Covenant) (section IX of the list of issues)

Right to privacy (article 17 of the Covenant) (section X of the list of issues)

Freedom of religion and expression: prohibition of propaganda for war and incitement to national, racial or religious hatred (articles 18, 19 and 20 of the Covenant) (section XI of the list of issues)

Freedom of assembly and association (articles 21, 22 and 25 of the Covenant) (section XII of the list of issues)

Protection of family and children (articles 23 and 24 of the Covenant) (section XIII of the list of issues)

2. The CHAIRMAN read out section IX of the list of issues concerning the second periodic report of Panama, regarding: (a) the distinction between expulsion and deportation; (b) whether an appeal against an expulsion order had suspensive effect; and (c) the compatibility with article 13 of the Covenant of the denial of the possibility of appeal from expulsion orders issued for reasons of health and public policy.

3. He read out section X of the list of issues, regarding information concerning the law and practice relating to implementation of article 17 of the Covenant, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 16 (32).

4. He then read out section XI of the list of issues, regarding:
(a) procedures for legal recognition and authorization of various religious denominations; how article 35 of the Constitution, providing for freedom of worship subject to respect for Christian morality and public order, affected such recognition, especially with regard to non-Christian religions;
(b) possible privileged treatment of the Roman Catholic Church in comparison with other churches or religious groups; (c) additional information concerning the practice of censorship in Panama and the effectiveness of legal guarantees relating to freedom of expression, particularly political dissent;
(d) functions of the National College of Journalists, and whether it was a government body or independent; whether a journalist must belong to the College in order to engage in the profession; what the College's procedures

for admission to membership were; and whether any journalist had been denied admission to the National College of Journalists since its inception; and (e) outcome of the studies undertaken by the National Advisory Commission to review the regulations governing the mass media, and whether any regulations had been adopted on the basis of the Commission's report.

5. He went on to read out section XII of the list of issues, regarding: (a) information concerning the law and practice relating to the establishment and functioning of political parties and trade unions and any relevant restrictions, and whether any political parties had been banned since the consideration of the initial report; and (b) additional information concerning the law and practice relating to State involvement in financing political parties, pursuant to article 135 of the Constitution, and how equality of treatment in that respect of the various political parties was ensured.

6. Lastly, he read out section XIII of the list of issues, regarding: (a) whether the draft Family Code had been enacted, and, if so, what its main provisions were; (b) information concerning the activities and accomplishments of the Authority for the Child and the Family; (c) the practical measures taken to enhance the enjoyment of women of equal rights during marriage; and (d) any plans to remove the discriminatory provisions in respect of divorce contained in the Civil Code.

7. Ms. de LEON (Panama), referring to section IX (a), said that expulsion orders were used where foreigners who had met the requirements for entry into the country were found to be undesirable on various grounds, including that of national security. As indicated in the report, under the relevant legislation the Government could expel any alien present within its territory. Deportation orders applied where aliens had not complied with the requisite legal formalities for entry or had stayed beyond the period permitted by their visa.

8. With regard to section IX (b), an application for review of an expulsion order could be made to the authority issuing the order, and an application for appeal against an expulsion order could be made to a higher authority. Both applications would have suspensive effect. With regard to section IX (c), in addition to applications for review and appeal, the remedy of habeas corpus was available.

9. Mr. CRUZ (Panama), with reference to sections X and XI of the list of issues, said that the rights protected under article 17 of the Covenant were provided for under various articles of the Constitution. Interference with or attacks on the rights guaranteed under article 17 might arise in the context of freedom of expression, which could be exercised only with due regard to the protection afforded by the law against defamation and libel, with the consequential right to compensation. The legislation on freedom of expression was currently under review, in which connection the Committee's general comments would prove very valuable.

(Mr. Cruz, Panama)

10. Commenting on section XI (c), he said that during the military dictatorship not only had various legal measures been adopted to restrict freedom of expression, but a number of newspapers and radio stations had been closed. With the change of government the situation had altered completely, and those media which had been closed down or confiscated had been reopened and restored to their rightful owners. Various dissident groups now produced their own radio programmes, and freedom of expression had become firmly established.

11. With regard to section XI (d), the National College of Journalists had been formed during the latter years of the dictatorship, but had been denied legal recognition until the advent of the new Government. It was not necessary to be a member of the College in order to exercise the profession of journalism, and other professional associations existed. Admission to the National College of Journalists was open to all those engaged in the profession, and, so far as he was aware, no one had ever been denied membership.

12. With regard to section XI (e), the National Advisory Commission established to review the regulations governing the mass media had only recently presented its conclusions, which had already given rise to a wide-ranging debate. The bill which would ultimately go to the Assembly on the basis of the National Advisory Commission's conclusions would thus already have been subject to national debate prior to its consideration in the Assembly.

13. Mr. PEREIRA (Panama), with reference to section XII of the list of issues, said that the first elections in Panama had been held in 1980 to elect only a small percentage of the members of Parliament. That had been the first time political parties had participated in the political process in Panama. Subsequent elections had been held in 1984 and 1989 with fuller participation by political parties.

14. In order to be recognized as a political party, a grouping had to have a minimum support base of some 3.5 per cent of the electorate, corresponding to approximately 30,000 voters. Prior to the 1984 election application of electoral requirements had been so lax that a government-sponsored phoney party had been registered simply by culling names from telephone directories. In the 1989 election almost all the parties on which the Government had been based had disappeared owing to their failure to attract the necessary minimum percentage of votes cast.

15. No political parties had in fact been banned since the Committee had considered Panama's initial report. Six political parties currently met the legal requirements to be recognized as such and participate in the political process. In that connection the law required that political parties possess a democratic internal structure, with decisions taken by voting. In the absence of complaints about the conduct of a party's affairs, the Government would not

normally intervene, but it did have enforcement means, in the form of the Electoral Tribunal and Electoral Prosecutor, at its disposal.

16. The legal status of trade unions was protected under the Constitution and the Labour Code. Trade union rights applied to private enterprises but not to public sector organizations. Following the military coup in 1968, some private enterprises had been transferred to the public sector through nationalization. As a result an anomalous situation had arisen, since the Government had allowed the trade unions in those enterprises to remain in existence in what had become State enterprises. That had led to a belief on the part of other State employees that they, too, should be allowed trade union rights. The situation was particularly striking in the banking industry, where employees of the State banking sector lacked protection under the Labour Code which was available to employees in private banks. Clearly, a problem of social justice existed which demanded a political solution.

17. The financing of political parties was governed by article 135 of the Constitution, but that article had remained without effect as a result of failure to agree on provisions to translate it into practice. Accordingly, it was not possible to answer the question in section XII (b) concerning equality with regard to the financing of political parties. In that connection he asked members of the Committee if they would make available to the Panamanian Government details of their relevant domestic legislation to assist Panama in devising its own norms.

18. Ms. PARDO (Panama), referring to section XIII (a), said that the draft Family Code was currently under review. The Code provided protection in all areas relating to the family. With regard to section (b), the functions of the Authority for the Child and the Family had been transferred to the Social Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour. As indicated in earlier statements by her delegation, that Department was devising an ambitious plan in various spheres of concern to the child and the family.

19. With regard to sections XIII (c) and (d), discrimination on the basis of sex was unconstitutional. Further, the Civil Code treated married men and women on an equal basis. None the less there were cultural problems, and there was some way to go before the protection of women's rights could be fully assured. In that connection, the Social Welfare Department was formulating an education campaign to make women aware of their legal rights. All discriminatory provisions in respect of divorce had been abolished, and recent legislation gave women the right to keep their own surname on marriage.

20. Mr. AGUILAR asked which illnesses could constitute grounds for the expulsion of aliens for reasons of health.

21. Mr. SADI said that Panama's legislative provisions concerning the expulsion of aliens were laid down in broad terms which did not seem to provide adequate safeguards against arbitrary expulsions. Perhaps the

(Mr. Sadi)

Government would consider setting forth such regulations in greater detail and including a right of appeal, in accordance with the requirements of the Covenant. Given the fact that deportation orders could be appealed, he asked whether the Government could arbitrarily decide to resort to expulsion rather than deportation. With respect to elections, he asked whether the boundaries of electoral districts were drawn in a manner that ensured equitable representation of different political parties in the Government. Details on the regulations governing the formation of political parties would also be useful, in view of the prohibition of incitement to discrimination or violence contained in article 20 (2) of the Covenant. With respect to the protection of children, he wondered whether Panama had considered ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, he expressed concern about the indication in paragraph 46 of the report (CCPR/C/42/Add.7) that girls became legally entitled to marry at the age of 12. He asked whether that provision of the Panamanian Civil Code had been amended, since it appeared to violate the spirit of the Covenant. He also wondered whether Panamanian law provided safeguards against child abuse.

22. Mr. WENNERGREN noted that the right to vote was characterized as a duty in the Panamanian Constitution, and asked how the requirement to vote was enforced and whether exceptions were made, in accordance with article 18 (2) of the Covenant, in cases where participation in elections was contrary to religious beliefs. Article 19 (2) of the Covenant, which provided for freedom of information, implied that Governments should operate under a policy of openness. He wondered whether such openness was the exception or the rule in Panama.

23. Mrs. HIGGINS said, with respect to the question of unionization in the public and banking sectors, that article 22 of the Covenant made no distinction between the public and private sectors in prohibiting unnecessary restrictions on the right to form and join trade unions. Moreover, none of the conditions under which restrictions were permissible would apply to the banking sector.

24. She asked for confirmation of the report that government workers who had participated in a demonstration on 5 December 1990 had been dismissed from their posts by virtue of Law No. 25 of 1990. She also asked whether the universities' financial dependence on the Government impaired their freedom to hire and dismiss staff members, and in particular whether State funding was ever withheld from universities in order to secure the employment or dismissal of certain persons.

25. Mr. PRADO VALLEJO, noting that Panama's legislation contained provisions which prohibited all types of peaceful demonstrations and permitted the dismissal of workers who participated in such demonstrations, recalled that in 1990, there had been protests in Panama concerning the Government's tapping of private telephone lines, and requested clarification of the Government's public declaration that its actions had been prompted by security

(Mr. Prado Vallejo)

considerations. The rights guaranteed in the Covenant had also been affected by the Government's cancellation of the licences for four radio frequencies in 1990; he asked for comments on that subject.

26. Although Panama's legislation recognized the right to strike, it was discriminatory in that it did not recognize that right for certain categories of workers, such as bank employees, United States employees and Canal Zone workers. He wondered whether there was any possibility that those exceptions would be eliminated. With respect to freedom of association, he noted that workers who had participated in the strike of December 1990 were not allowed to belong to trade unions. He, too, was concerned about Law No. 25 of 1990, whose constitutionality was currently under review by Panama's Supreme Court, and asked whether any conclusions had been reached.

27. Mr. ANDO noted that article 13 of the Covenant provided that the expulsion of aliens was permissible only on the grounds of compelling reasons of national security, and asked whether that criterion was strictly applied in Panama. He also requested clarification of paragraph 47 of the report, which indicated that the State did not make allowances to large families.

28. Mr. PEREIRA (Panama), referring to Mr. Sadi's question regarding elections, said that Panama's electoral process comprised two coexisting electoral systems. In districts with a population of between 20,000 and 30,000 persons which had traditionally supported a particular political party, only the party that won the elections was represented in the Government. However, in districts with a population of over 40,000, there was a system of proportional representation which ensured that minority parties were also represented in the Government, provided they won a certain percentage of the vote. Approximately half of Panama's population lived in areas where proportional representation was in effect.

29. With respect to unions, the Constitution did not distinguish between public and private employment in its recognition of the right to form and join trade unions; it was the Labour Code which restricted unionization to private enterprises. The Constitution also recognized the right of all employees to strike, providing only that the law could, if necessary, impose special restrictions on the right to strike in the case of public service employees.

30. In reply to Mrs. Higgins, he said that the events of 5 December 1990 had concerned the participation of some union leaders in an attempted coup d'état organized by a former military leader. There was no general policy of dismissing public employees from their posts for participating in political activities that criticized the Government.

31. Concerns had also been voiced with respect to allegations of illegal detentions by the Panamanian police force following a government-authorized search for arms in certain residential areas of Panama City. On 9 March 1990, 736 persons had been arrested, 263 of whom had been charged with serious

(Mr. Pereira, Panama)

crimes such as murder, robbery, assault and drug trafficking; similar operations had taken place on 13 March and 6 April 1990, which had also resulted in criminal charges. There was no evidence that any detainees or other persons affected by the operations had questioned their legality in court. It should be remembered that under the previous Government, the security forces had indiscriminately distributed thousands of arms throughout the capital. The security situation in Panama, therefore, was such that extraordinary measures were necessary to find and disarm persons who possessed weapons illegally. The Government's fundamental concern was to promote democracy and to protect human rights in accordance with the Covenant.

32. Mr. CRUZ (Panama), while confirming that there were no constitutional obstacles to the participation of public employees in unions and strikes, pointed out that some Panamanian lawyers felt that the Constitution's provisions concerning unions and strikes applied only to employees of private enterprises because they did not appear in the section of the Constitution which dealt specifically with civil servants. According to that interpretation, the question of compliance with the Covenant in that respect was not a legal but a constitutional issue.

33. With respect to freedom of expression, a decree enacted by the former military Government in 1969 had established censorship boards, ostensibly for the purpose of reviewing films to determine which categories of persons should be allowed to view them. However, there had been cases in which entire editions of certain books had been withdrawn from stores by virtue of that decree, on the grounds that they constituted a threat to morals or to public order. The decree had therefore been strongly criticized, and he believed that President Endara should take prompt action to introduce legislation which would prevent such abuses.

34. Law No. 25 had been adopted by the Legislative Assembly after an abortive coup d'état in December 1990 which had been led by a retired military officer who had escaped from detention. The public service had initiated an investigation to determine whether there had been any involvement of State employees in the plot, but no such collusion had so far been established, although the President of the Republic and the Attorney-General held divergent views on that question. Law No. 25 was currently under review in the Supreme Court on the grounds of its alleged imcompatibility with the Constitution.

35. The Constitution incorporated guarantees of the privacy of the individual. In the case of a criminal investigation, however, police could be authorized to carry out phone-tapping operations. Such authorizations might, of course, lead to a conflict between domestic law and the provisions of the Covenant on the right to privacy.

36. With regard to the cancellation of four radio frequencies by the Government, which had been mentioned by Mr. Prado Vallejo, he said that, while

(Mr. Cruz, Panama)

he was unable to provide further clarification on that specific issue, the whole question of regulations for the mass media was under consideration by the Legislative Assembly with a view to the introduction of new legislation.

37. In connection with the right to strike, he pointed out that the Canal Zone was within the jurisdiction of the United States, and that Panamanian labour legislation would accordingly not apply in the Zone.

38. Ms. de LEON (Panama), referring to the question of expulsion of aliens on grounds of the need to protect public health, said that such expulsions were rare, and that in each case a justification had to be provided. Although the individual concerned could appeal only if the remedy of amparo (enforcement of constitutional rights) could be invoked to suspend the expulsion order, he or she was entitled to legal representation in any hearing before the authorities issuing the order. In recent months the only expulsion order had related to a person suffering from cholera.

39. Panama had recently incorporated the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into its domestic legislation, and was in the process of preparing a draft Family Code. Any suggestions from the Committee regarding suitable provisions in that regard would be most welcome. Minors in Panama were protected by the Minors' Guardianship Tribunal, a special court for children established in 1958. In general, however, efforts to prevent child abuse and ill-treatment were hampered by the lack of funds resulting from the country's continuing economic difficulties.

40. Mr. PEREIRA (Panama) referring to the comments which had been made regarding the minimum age for marriage, said that the problem was not the statutory age but rather the fact that girls even younger than 14 years were becoming pregnant. That was a widespread phenomenon which was of serious concern to the authorities.

41. The CHAIRMAN invited the members of the Committee to make their general observations on the second periodic report of Panama.

42. Mr. PRADO VALLEJO welcomed the objectivity shown by the Panamanian delegation in its replies to questions which, however searching, were intended to foster a spirit of constructive dialogue between the Committee and the new Government of Panama.

43. Latin Americans deplored the fact that the former regime had been brought to an end by means of an invasion which had entailed large-scale suffering and dislocation, and they sympathized with the view that those who had been injured or who had lost their homes should be compensated. At the same time, it was essential that, since the chaotic conditions of the immediate post-invasion period had given way to a more stable situation, efforts should now be made to repeal discriminatory legislation, such as Law No. 25, which contravened the rights affirmed by the Covenant, and to expedite judicial proceedings against persons held in custody.

(Mr. Prado Vallejo)

44. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that a further report from Panama would be forthcoming in the near future, and that it would allay some of the concerns voiced by members of the Committee during the discussions.

45. Mr. EL-SHAFEI noted with approval the legislative changes that had been taking place in Panama to eliminate conflicts between Panamanian laws and the provisions of the Covenant, but drew attention to those discrepancies, particularly with regard to the powers conferred on the security forces in a state of emergency. Although the reasoning behind such measures could be understood in the light of the difficult times the country had recently experienced, it was to be hoped that such abuses as the detention of trade unionists and leaders of political parties would soon cease, and that the conditions under which the detainees were held would be improved.

46. With regard to investigative procedures, he said that it might be helpful if training programmes for the police force were established in order to familiarize the police with the procedures set out in such instruments as the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.

47. Mr. MAVROMMATIS agreed with Mr. Prado Vallejo that a new report reflecting the changing circumstances in Panama was necessary, particularly in view of the unbalanced nature of the previous report, which had been submitted by a dictatorial regime which had acceded to the Covenant for reasons best known to itself. He hoped that the new Government of Panama would find the exchange of views in the Committee helpful in compiling such a follow-up report.

48. Mr. ANDO expressed his appreciation to the Panamanian delegation, whose input had largely compensated for the brevity of its second periodic report. While the Government was, indeed, in a very difficult position, he urged it to make every effort to guarantee human rights without relying on outside assistance. Panama's own initiatives in the field of human rights would be particularly important when sovereignty over the Panama Canal Zone was restored.

49. The expulsion procedure and, in particular, the fate and treatment of Chinese nationals who were in Panama illegally, still gave cause for concern. Referring to the protection of minors and children, he said that the age for marriage was too low. The review of Panamanian law was a step in the right direction, but he underscored the need for full implementation of the provisions of the Covenant. Much remained to be done in that regard. In particular, the proper economic and social conditions for ensuring the long-term protection of human rights must be established.

50. Ms. CHANET commended the delegation on its presentation of a report it had not prepared and recognized that radical changes could not be expected to take place in 14 months. Noting that Panama was about to embark on major constitutional reforms, she expressed particular interest in the magistrature and the creation of a technical police force, which she hoped would come into

(Ms. Chanet)

being promptly. She agreed with Mr. El-Shafei's remarks concerning a code of conduct for police officials. She was also pleased that prison reform would eliminate the problem of overcrowding.

51. Article 33 of the Panamanian Constitution was hardly compatible with articles 9 and 14 of the Covenant. A person could not be both judge and party to a trial. Referring to article 43 of the Constitution, she said that the circumstances under which a law concerning the public order could be retroactive were too vague. That article and article 102, which the delegation had indicated was the subject of controversy, should be repealed. The Committee did not yet have sufficient information to determine whether the policies of the new Government would result in the full implementation of the Covenant. She hoped that that would be more evident in the third periodic report.

52. Mrs. HIGGINS commended the Panamanian delegation for the extreme frankness with which it had replied to the Committee's questions and described the problems still confronting the country. For example, the delegation had indicated that the Covenant was not well known in Panama; that it was not always possible to award compensation for past violations; that the granting of compensation under the penal code would necessitate a revision of the civil code; that the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners had been disseminated only in a perfunctory manner; and that constitional texts, laws and even Supreme Court decisions were not always enforced.

53. However, genuine progress had been achieved, including the release of prisoners from military control; the conduct of new training programmes and seminars for the reintegration of prisoners in society; and the adoption of a new procedure for investigating police conduct, regulations on the use of firearms by police, and provisions to bring telephone tapping under judicial control. Issues which must still be addressed were, inter alia, the disturbing infant mortality rate; the restraints on trade and the exercise of professions by aliens; unionization and dissemination of the Covenant. She hoped that the delegation's exchange with the Committee would persuade Panamanian officials to incorporate the provisions of the Covenant into domestic legislation.

54. Mr. WENNERGREN expressed appreciation for the delegation's comprehensive, informative presentation, which had largely compensated for gaps in the written report. The exchange had helped to focus attention on developments in Panama designed to strengthen the rule of law and the protection of human rights and it had established a useful basis for the consideration of Panama's third periodic report.

55. Mr. LALLAH thanked the delegation for providing so much information on questions which had not been addressed by previous delegations. There was no basis for the debate concerning which should have primacy, international law or Constitutional law; a State was duty-bound to carry out obligations it had accepted under international law.

(Mr. Lallah)

56. Earlier in the discussion, he had referred to insufficient public awareness of the Covenant and Optional Protocol in Panama. However, he had since learned that the Committee had received two communications under the Optional Protocol and that the Panamanian Government had been extremely cooperative in that regard.

57. He agreed with Mr. Mavrommatis that the judiciary must be institutionally and otherwise independent of the executive and legislative branches. Independence must be ensured in the system of appointments to the judiciary; salaries and conditions of service, such as tenure; and in the application of disciplinary measures, which, ideally, should be taken only in the gravest circumstances. Perhaps the third periodic report would provide an account of the measures taken to that end.

58. Mr. WAKO noted that the composition of the delegation itself was an indication of Panama's commitment to equality between men and women. The Attorney-General's presentation had indeed attested to the independence of the judiciary (section VIII (b) of the list of issues), for Mr. Cruz had openly disagreed with his Government, for example, with respect to the role of workers in abortive coup attempts.

59. He agreed with Mr. Lallah that a State party was duty-bound to abide by the obligations it had assumed under the Covenant, irrespective of its own constitutional provisions. However, he was encouraged by the Panamanian delegation's anxiousness to seek the Committee's advice on how best to implement a number of provisions of the Covenant.

60. He remained concerned about the rights of workers, and the use of force by the police and the army. Machinery for the investigation of police abuses must be strengthened and prison reforms must be put into effect. Much remained to be done to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and the bar, following the welcome repeal of the laws suspending the legal profession. He also remained concerned about the minimum age for marriage in Panama; the situation of the Chinese minority; measures to integrate the indigenous populations in the mainstream of national life; and the expulsion procedure. Recognizing that change could not take place immediately in a nation which was making a new beginning, he commended Panama on the steps it had already taken to ensure the protection of human rights.

61. Mr. AGUILAR also commended the Panamanian delegation on its candour, which made up for the brevity of the report submitted. As a national of Costa Rica, he had been painfully aware of the difficulties Panamanians had experienced under the previous regime when drug trafficking had been sanctioned at the highest level and human rights had been totally non-existent in Panama. At that time thousands of Panamanians had crossed the border into Costa Rica, fleeing prison or government persecution and numerous corpses had been found at the border, most notably that of Hugo Spadafora. It was perfectly understandable that most Panamanians should feel uncomfortable about the invasion of their country, even though it had ultimately brought about their liberation.

(Mr. Aguilar)

62. The fervour with which Panama sought to protect human rights was unprecedented in a young Latin American democracy. Even so, regrettably, certain violations of the rights of members of the former regime were begin alleged. Reading from a letter from a citizens' group on constitutional reform, in which certain violations were described, he expressed the hope that the new Government would be broad-minded enough to deal with those cases. He was less concerned about discrepancies between Panamanian constitutional law and the provisions of the Covenant, convinced that laws adopted under duress or under orders from the military would be repealed in the near future.

63. The CHAIRMAN thanked the Panamanian delegation for its extremely constructive contribution to the dialogue and recognized that certain remaining problems were attributable to the transition to democracy after a long period of dictatorship. The Panamanian delegation's presentation had largely compensated for the inadequacy of the report and he hoped that the third periodic report would meet the Committee's guidelines. As the third periodic report had been due in June 1988, the Committee would set a new deadline.

64. Mr. CRUZ (Panama) reiterated that his delegation had wished to present a true picture of what remained to be done in Panama in terms of guaranteeing human rights. The delegation's exchange of views with the Committee had brought his country one step closer to attaining that objective. He expressed appreciation for the Committee's input and said that every effort would be made to elaborate a third periodic report which would comply with the Committee's reporting guidelines.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.